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RACE AND THE SOLID SOUTH.

THE discussion of the Race issue and the Solid South has fallen into the hands of ingenious speculators, with many assumed facts and imaginary sequences. So great and complicated a question above all requires common sense, a close observation of facts, and unobscured logic.

The present status shows the supremacy of the whites in social and political rule : while the blacks have all the legal equality that written constitutions can secure. Does intimidation, corruption, force, and fraud on the part of the whites override all legal enfranchisement ? And if so, is there any remedy, if desirable, but time ? This antagonism of races, whether arising from "previous servitude" or the natural antipathies of race, thus exhibited, makes the black race of the South, for all practical purposes, of no force in the state and national elections. And the white republicans of the South allied to the blacks share the same fate. Thus, as parties now stand, the Democrats rule the South against black and white Republicans with autocratic power. Is this the best thing possible ?

Thus the Solid South, united to a few Northern States, by a minority-vote of the whole people, rule. Is this the best for the nation ? Will not a toleration of a minority-rule debauch the public conscience, bring the rule of the majority into contempt, and thus self-government be lost ? If the "government of the people by the people for the people" is not desirable or possible, would it not be better to come to the rule of an autocracy by more direct methods at once and forever ?

If we are not prepared to go back into the old worn-out slums of despotism, what can save us ?

Will the superior increase by birth of the blacks do it ?

Some years ago I had occasion to compile a comparative table, running for a long term of years, showing that, as a matter of fact, the whites of the slave states increased at a greater ratio than

the blacks. Has that ratio been changed by the freedom of the slaves? I think not. I know, of my own knowledge, from unquestionable testimony, of three children being killed after birth by their black parents, in my own neighborhood. So I have reason to believe that, by abortion before and by homicide after birth, the increase of the blacks in all the South has been retarded. Immigration to the South is all in favor of the whites. Again, the Solid South has great temptation to make false returns of the black voters—seeing that increased numbers give increased political power. But, admitting the assumption that the blacks are increasing faster than the whites in spite of the influx of whites and the emigration of blacks, how long will that state of affairs exist? Now, the law of population and subsistence applies alike to man and other animals—that is, population depends upon the food. But, in the artificial civilized life of man, the willful destruction of offspring, want of shelter, clothing, medicine, and proper nourishment and nursing, to say nothing of epidemic diseases, falling mostly upon the blacks, the despotic rule of the South will forever keep them in the supremacy. For it is the substratum of every people that perishes first for want of subsistence.

Will education be the remedy?

Education, of course, gives power. But who is to put the “salt upon the bird’s tail?” The “*Memphis Avalanche*,” one of the most intelligent of Southern editors, answers that: the South rules from above, and the North from below. That is, in other words, the whites of the South have the ascendancy, though the blacks may increase ever so much, and they intend to keep the supremacy. They will oppose the education of the blacks, as before in slavery. Nevertheless the friends of equality before the law must use all the means—and education is one of them—with or without the co-operation of the oligarchy, as in Berea, in Kentucky, where blacks and whites are educated and protected by the mountain people.

Will force succeed?

I think not. Force has been tried, and, like the storm in *Æsop’s* fable of the sun and the winds, caused the traveler to bind his cloak the more closely around him—it was the chief cause of southern solidity. If this was a central despotism, then force by arms would be the remedy, certainly. But the disease is too great and widespread for such remedy, and not suited to a republican

form of government. The ten years of such attempt should warn our statesmen not to attempt that remedy again for the dissolving of the Solid South.

What is the true solution ?

The North has the numerical majority, the superior education, and greatest wealth. She, too, must become *solid*. She must hold the government with no equivocal intent. Having given the South full legal equality with the North, she must show that she is determined to stand by and enforce all the penalties of the bond. The South is now very well content to bury, nationally, "the bloody shirt." *She is in power*. It is not the rider of the horse who cries out, "ride and tie," "now dismount, and let the footman take the saddle." The ambitious men of the South, seeing the national honors and emoluments impossible so long as the South usurps undue power and tramples upon the vital principle of self-government—the sacred ballot, one vote and a fair count—will themselves break up the solid South. The blacks must be divided between the northern and southern parties : that will break up the caste of race. That, and time, will make us one people, and blot out the old Mason's and Dixon's line, and all will be equal before the law.

Social equality hardly enters into the political discussion of the race-issue. Nevertheless it does disturb legal rights and the normal relations of the races.*

A word as to the legal right of intermarriage.

Admit that there is a natural antipathy between the black and white races, for argument's sake, is that a reason why marriage should by law be forbidden ? The right of unrestrained

* There are two facts which, generally unknown or overlooked, are of great importance in the consideration of the race-issue. First, the races or nations of blacks in Africa are as distinct in form and intelligence as the whites of Europe. Consider the Moors of ancient times and the Arabs of the late conflict in the Soudan, running down to the lowest type of Africans—Bushmen. These varieties of race by the slave trade has become more or less mingled in American blacks. I have known, myself, Africans of Caucasian face and craniums as far removed from the ordinary Congo as the first of the white race is from the lowest.

The other fact is, that in a little over a half century I have remarked great improvement in the craniums and facial angles in the same families of blacks. So, under favorable surroundings, the progress of races is rapidly advanced—centuries crowding into years. These indisputable facts, as I believe, cannot be ignored in the discussion and solution of the race-issue.

marriage is denied to the whites and blacks in the South by law. But does not every one see that the law is intended to protect the white, and not the black race, and therefore is unequal in its force, and, so far, works in favor of caste and the destruction of real "equality before the law?" The objections to such a law is: that it destroys the self-respect of and degrades the whole black race. A wise statesman should do all things to cultivate the race, not to degrade it. But I deny the right of society or the state to say whom I shall or will not marry. In this sacred relation no one can justly forbid the inalienable elements of human happiness. But, admit that there is an instinctive repugnance between whites and blacks sufficient to warrant a restraining law of intermarriage, then such repugnance is also sufficient without law, and therefore such law is needless in the main issues, while in its degradation of a whole race, it is *per se* criminal. I conclude, then, all laws recognizing inequality between the races in marriage, in public functions, in churches, in places of travel, in schools, may be safely omitted. As a matter of taste or judgment, if you please, I am in favor of pure breeds in domestic animals, and among the races of men, and even among the white varieties of the race there is reason to believe that those varieties are happiest where intermarriage is confined to the nearest type and closest affinities of rank, education, and sentiment. But as a matter of *right*, and the great principles of human civilization, I would here, as in political power, let all stand "EQUAL BEFORE THE LAW."

I might add that in Europe, where I saw several blacks and whites intermarried, such alliance being there everywhere admitted by law, it created no sensation whatever; as such unions are so few as to cause no fear of any serious amalgamation of races.

Beyond all these data, and in a wider circle, lies the capital assumption that the South is the superior people in that highest development of intellect and moral qualities—*fitness to rule*. They say that the Roundhead, or Puritan civilization of the North, where so much weight is given to wealth as well as narrow views of religion and life, caused the South here, as in England, to rise to political supremacy; and that, after a quarter of a century in a minority and "exile," "the King has come to his own again," and "come to stay." Some of the South's ancient supremacy

was due, no doubt, to a broader and truer view of religion and human life, making this earth the arena of development and happiness, rather than the uncertain and perhaps untrue substratum and relations of a future and unknown state. Thus the Puritan ideas (like the exclusiveness of the Jewish hierarchy, while, perhaps, it gave certain force of character to that nation, repelled the sympathy of other peoples) excited antipathy in more liberal minds, and give the South allies to a large extent in the North itself.

But the main cause of the South's political ascendancy was due, no doubt, to slavery, which, providing for economical wants, allowed the best intellects to concentrate in politics. This was well enough in such an Union as ours—the North playing the part of the belly, and the South the brain. But where, as shown by the late war, the “belly” was withdrawn, the “brain” perished.

The first—Puritanism—is being more and more eradicated by a wider thought in the New Englanders themselves, and, by the large immigration from other nations, especially the Germans, whose views of life are more liberal, and, as I think, more in accordance with natural law. Slavery is gone forever, and the North and South stand at equal vantage in the future race for supremacy. Here, as elsewhere, we rest upon the survival of the fittest, and we shall see what we shall see.

CASSIUS M. CLAY.